

PROMOTING ONLINE SAFETY

As educators, we try to do all that we can to ensure that your children have a positive experience when they go online at school. Here are some tips to help you protect them when they go online at your house or at the home of a friend.

- **Help your children understand the potential dangers of giving out personal information when they go online**

Most online interaction is benign. However, children need to be cautioned about giving out too much information about themselves—name, phone number, school or home address—to strangers that they may encounter online. Help your children understand that it's sometimes hard to know for sure whether the people they meet online are really the kinds of people they say they are.

- **Encourage your children to tell you if something happens online that makes them feel uncomfortable**

Your children may accidentally access a Web site or open a file attachment that disturbs them. Or they may interact with someone who asks questions that disturb them or who uses inappropriate language. Make sure your children know that they should let you know if something happens online that makes them feel uncomfortable. Together you can figure out the best course of action to take.

- **Keep an eye on what your children do online**

Place your home computer where you will be able to monitor your children when they go online. Consider whether you want to use monitoring or filtering tools to monitor or restrict their access to sites that you might consider inappropriate. Consider whether you want to retain control of the password to your family's online account so that you know when your children are going online.

- **Let your children teach you what they know about the Internet**

Going online together is a good family activity. A child's self-esteem can be boosted when he or she can be "the teacher" who helps a parent find and use an interesting Web site.

This information has been developed by the Consortium for School Networking's Safeguarding the Wired Schoolhouse project. There are many good resources available to help you learn more about promoting online safety. Information on these resources is available at <http://www.safewiredschools.org/other.html>.

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